

585 "straw-boys" go round with long straw masks on, and if they do not get either money or liquor will threaten to break the windows and furniture of the house. The women marry very young, from fifteen 582 years upwards; and, if not settled in life by twenty or so, they usually emigrate.

844 Infants are given butter immediately after birth, and are carefully watched, lest they should be "taken away" or changed. For some similar reason a parturient woman has a string tied round the wrist or one of the fingers. All the wood in a house is carefully put outside if 763 the death of one of the inmates is thought to be imminent; and if it should occur the neighbours dread to give wood to make the coffin, as they believe that the person who does so will be the next to die; and if the plank of which the coffin is to be made is not taken down from the loft where it generally is, before the person dies, no inducement can make them use it for the purpose. The people never bury their 764 dead on a Monday, nor on the day of the week in which the Feasts of the Holy Innocents has fallen for that year. They have a great [762] horror of suicides, and believe that if one were to be buried in the graveyard it would cause the other corpses to turn over on their faces.

A wake is held the night before the funeral, on those who have died abroad or been lost at sea, when the news arrives; but owing to the influence brought to bear on the people by the clergy in this [178] matter, it is now only attended by relatives of the deceased, and the character of the ceremony is much altered, most of the old games, the mock marriage, &c., being altogether obsolete, while the insobriety, formerly common, is now a thing of the past. At the funeral the coffin [482] is carried out the back door, and is followed by the mourners. On reaching the graveyard it is carried thrice round the old church in the direction of the sun, and as soon as the grave is reached all those attending the funeral scatter and go to pray at the graves of their own relatives, which, having done, they raise the keen, beginning at the person farthest from the open grave.

The Rev. E. O'Growney, who has generously placed at my disposal a number of notes taken during a visit to these islands, thus describes a funeral he witnessed in Inishbofin:—"The old Irish funeral *casine* is still used in its full perfection. I happened to be engaged in the church of St. Colman, deciphering a peculiar Latin inscription there, when a large number of people, chiefly women, brought the body of an infant for interment. While the body was being interred the women 764 scattered about the churchyard, each going to the grave of her own 533 friends. Those farthest from the newly-made grave began a low